



The Shortcut



mystery

humorous

adventure

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Chapter 1 by Adi Gonzales

“Everybody run!!!” Shrieked Myra.

I ran as fast as I can, but it didn’t help. The Snoops caught up with us and opened their big, chubby arms ready to catch us. They caught everyone, except me.

Friday 2nd of October

I was just on my way to the supermarket to buy a gumball, when I received a text from Myra my spy-colleague.

“Hey Xyna. r u free this weekend? We have another mission 2 do.”

“Sure, ill meet this wkend.” Yeah, my name’s Xyna. Don’t ask me why. My parents are hippies, even though it’s already modern time. They must be the last ones left. Anyway, I caught the gumball in my hand, popped it in my mouth and strutted back home to the smell of Ghost and Cayenne pepper barbeque in our backyard. I mean, who doesn’t love a bit of Jalapenos? It goes best with banana ice-cream!

Saturday 3rd of October

In my bedroom was an owl cuckoo clock hung up on my wall that wakes me up every 6:30am

(because my parents won’t let me buy a real alarm clock, waste of money, I mean, what’s the

difference?) It seems that I don’t

nothing to do, so I decided

‘get out of the bath!’ I knew

the clock across the bathroom and it said 6:49am. He was right, I do need to get out of the bath.

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The meeting's at ten past seven and the bus ride is twenty minutes long. I hopped out of the bath, did some stuff (like annoy my brother for half a minute) and ran out on to the streets.

It took a while, but I finally reached the headquarters. I didn't like to go there when I was little because it looked like an abandoned flat. But my dad worked there as an agent and investigated a lot of cases around the globe, so did my mum. They said it was just undercover so "normal people" don't get suspicious (but now they moved to a different branch so I'm on my own now - but if you think about it my parents really aren't normal people, huh?). The first time I went in there, I realised the actual thing was underground and my dad was signing me up as a junior spy. I was told once that I was good at acting and keeping secrets and I was very athletic and fit so I was perfect for the job. I just needed a bit of training, furniture polish and bleach, maybe. And here I am, I'm a former spy recruited by a top-secret agency that lets me handle hand-grenades, smoke bombs, sealanders, RPGs and other nifty gadgets. Oh, and sorry. I can't give you my autograph because a: it could give me away (what do you know? It's top-secret), and b: you can't see me at the moment because I'm in my invisible tracksuit. I don't know how they made it, our mad scientists said it was made by the latest fibre technology. "When a light source hits the tracksuit, it absorbs its energy and expands th....." Blah blah blah whatever, I just used it so no one can see me on the way.

Anyway, I arrived at the meeting two seconds, one millisecond and three nanoseconds late (I'm very good at counting, try it). I sat next to Myra and Becky, my classmate at school. We've worked together before undercover as a coach's twin daughters because Becky's dad was disguised as the coach and they needed "props" (because I'm athletic, remember?). Anyhow, our meeting was not about vociferous whistles or running around in insanely big circles, it was a new project. Shh, our chairman's speaking.

"Okay everybody! We are working on a new project," the room erupted louder and louder with excited murmurs and then simmered down. Mr. Chairman nodded. "We will need some children to go undercover to get some information as well from the Snoops and the Senior detectives will need to sneak into the Sleuths headquarter as well." Everybody was rumbling now. Myra and I stared at each other, sharing the same grin. "I need to get all the Junior agents and Senior

detectives to go to the toy shop across the flat, disguised as a different family. I will email the details to you this Sunday.

"Ooh, my name's going to be Xyna!"

"Mine's gonna be Pipette!"

"What's yours gonna be Xyna?" the two asked.

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"Hmm, maybe Maia or Annabeth." I replied, but I wasn't too sure.

"You should pick Joey!"

"You should pick Cynthia," that went on for a while so fast forward a bit...

When I came out of the flat, everyone was already out for a day off so I was alone. When my eyes finally got used to the light and much less blurry was when I saw a mysterious man covered in black.....everything. Black sunglasses, black scarf, black track pants, black socks, black sneakers, black coat, black underwear. Well, I can't actually tell if he's wearing black underwear, or even if he was wearing underwear, but there's an irony there. He even had a dark voice, kind of like Batman.

"Hello, my name's Carla." Oh, so she's a girl.

"No, I'm a boy. With hippy parents" So my parents aren't the last hippies. And how did he know what I was thinking? Did I say something?

"I understand you," I politely stammered.

"So, you're a spy?"

"I don't think I should tell you that," I was getting more and more suspicious by the minute.

"I can give you magical powers that only someone like you can possess. I have been watching you from three to twelve years old, you're quite impressive."

"Oh, uh, thank you," Who is he, a Snoop? Please don't taze me with laser sharp pointers, please...

"Uh, listen. I really need to go.."

"Ok, but just don't go out on Sunday. Then I shall pass on my powers, just like my ancestors. I think I have found my inheritance."

And as quick as any light source, I was gone.

Sunday 4 October

I stayed in my room all day. I know I am a spy, but it just seems so wrong to go outside. Was he trying to tell me something? I recited what he said yesterday, but none of it made sense. Just don't go out on Sunday. Then I shall pass on my powers, just like my ancestors. It just sounded so creepy when he said that. He might've been saying that I was in grave danger and he was going to protect me. Well, he could've just told me to 'be aware, you are in great danger' or something.

Maybe I was just a bit too negative. He might've been pranking me or something. Oh yeah! He probably was. But I still didn't want to go outside. What if something worse could happen. But little did he know I was in the Snoopers' Club. The Snoopers and the Sleuths are our enemy bases. We call

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details have arrived. Let's see, Myra Burns, Becky Wildin..... I'll check on those later. Ah there it is. Mr Chairman (that's what everyone calls him, his real name's Bowen Arrow).

Posted on Sunday 4 October, 10:30am

To: Myra Burns, Becky Wildin, Joseph Holly, Max Jordan, Kanye Ol....

Toy Shop: 67th St, Woodsville, New Hampshire (meet behind the store)

Time: 11:45am Wednesday

Family Chart:

Myra and Max (Jayla and Jackson), Kanye Oleander (Humphrey): looking for Xmas Presents

Xyna and Joseph (Maia and Joseph), Hamish Belden (Elishah): looking for baby gifts

Becky and Dorith (Phoebe and Ella), Delilah Keith (Liliah): looking for dolls

I need the others undercover at the car wash, bring any gadgets you like.

Car Wash: 5th Ave, Alford, Florida (meet at the mall on other side of the street)

Time: 2:00pm Thursday

Mission: Find the Snoops and/or Sleuths hideout and insert programme into hard drive. The rest is up to you, (Programme given to Kanye and Camelia).

From: Bowen Arrow

Seriously? The hideout is at a toy shop and a car wash? And how did Mr Chairman even know what we want our names to be? Hmm, something funny is happening and I'm gonna find out what it is. But not now, it's 'Family Spring Cleaning' day (as I said, my parents are hippies and it's not even Spring. Rules are we have to hum along to The Beatles while doing it). And it's teacher training week so I can have the whole week off. Also, I can get that creepy emo guy out of my head as well.

Monday 5 October

Hello, normal non-scaredy cat me. I was up yesterday and up until 1:56am in the boredom of non-sleepyheaditis. I didn't want to sleep because I didn't want my loopy parents to find out I have a secret. I'm a normal girl, I don't look like a pig-sty, despite the fact I'm a girl and not a hard-rock teenage. All of that is about thirteen hours to

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clean PER square centimetre (I had to clean all the mudcake stains off too, chocolate and ones made out of real mud). So I'm doing an owl forest renovate. Not really, but you get the idea, right? Okay, I'm being too talkative. I'll stop now, right now. Have you seen the movie of Supergirl? Ahh! I did it again.

Monday 5 October 9:15am

Whew, I did it. Now, if you didn't know, I'm actually a night-owl. I do most of my stuff at night. And that explains why I thought it was so bright when I came out of the flat, it was just about sunset. And I'm also an ambivert (oh, and the gumball thing at the supermarket was actually at a midnight sale for the last day, so that explains that). So I'm quiet and shy at times and I'm hate it when it comes to parties, but I know when to be fun and outgoing. That explains my friends thinking I'm the bonkers one in the gang, the talking mime as they might nickname me, only without the actions or the creepy clownface painted on. Oh, and if you haven't noticed, I have a ridiculously high IQ. I did a test at a university at somewhere up north, and studies have shown I have an impossibly abnormal brain for my age. That explains being top in mixed group. And now that you know about me you're probably wondering why I'm up at the day time. There's a special parade going on where you get to gather and meet as a community and everyone has to come. I've also learnt from last year to bring a trillion sunglasses along because you can hardly see anything because it's way too bright and shine. So I brought my best filthy-rich expensive sunglasses I made myself in the garage. I sold some copies for \$45,000 and they all sold out after the first one sold to a science lab of some kind because they were very effective and futuristic after the homograph and other widgets I face-planted into them (that's when they made me take the IQ test). Being a little greedy can sometimes be worth it cause now I'm a mi.. no, billionaire plus the fact that the people from the science lab donated a lot of money to help support my future. I discovered a new technology and nicknamed it hatherology because there was only a tiny trace of it when I found beneath the earth's surface. There's probably more of it elsewhere. Scientists are now using this technology and use it for machines that prevent ALS, and a new electronics company called 'Dybohot' (and best of all, it's organic and environmentally friendly. They didn't waste it, they're just wirelessly connecting it to the source. I taught them how to do it) It's making millions right now and I get a share of the money

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that. Oh, no. What have I gotten myself into? "Seeeeeeeh-naahh! Hurry ahh-up! And don't forget to wear that shirt I bought you last week! And don't forget to wash your face!!"
"I'm coming, I'm coming!"

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